



Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Monthly Bulletin *November 2007*

VISION

Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, in concurrence with the Colorado Department of Human Service vision, seeks to become the nation's leader in empowering Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, families, and communities to become safe and independent.

MISSION

To promote the interests of our constituents and to work to ensure the quality of communication access for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing living in the state of Colorado.

Cliff's Notes

There is a poem from the 1986 Amish-Country Cookbook, edited by Bob and Sue Miller, I would like for you to read and ponder:

Where is the greatest place in the world? Right here!
Right where you are.
Build your life on a strong foundation
Right where you are.
Surround yourself with lifelong friends.
Right where you are.
Get involved in building a community.
Right where you are.
Let your roots grow deep. Watch your life stand tall.
Right where you are.

It is a privilege to live in Colorado. It is also about us taking pride in what we do, people we have for friends, the work we do, where we live, and the possibilities that the future holds for us and our future generations. This is how the Commission was built. The Commission is in a sense a community.

I want to take this opportunity to say THANK YOU for all of your involvement, support and hope! I look forward to us continuing our meaningful journey together.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

About Joe Benedetto, Chair of the Commission

Joe Benedetto, Chair of the Commission, received his Bachelor of Arts degree Government from Gallaudet University in 1970 and his Master's Degree in Deaf Education from McDaniel College (Western Maryland) in 1974. He considers it a great privilege and honor to have served the deaf and hard of hearing community in a variety of professional and community service activities, including service to the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf while he lived in Louisiana, for close to 40 years. In addition to his wealth of experience, the most important qualification that he brings to the Commission is Heaven's Gift of Deafness: one has to be deaf to understand what it means to be deaf. His personal experience of

deafness has provided insight and inspiration for addressing issues and concerns facing our deaf and hard of hearing Community. Joe is an ordained Roman Catholic Deacon for the Archdiocese of Denver, and is assigned to the Holy Cross Deaf Ministry Program in Thornton. Joe has a wife and three children. They reside in Thornton.

Legal Auxiliary Services Program

Did you know that you, as a deaf and hard of hearing consumer, have the right to have a legally qualified interpreter(s) or CART provider in any stage of a court proceeding? The Commission pays for appropriate auxiliary aids and services when requested by you and approved by the Court.

If you would like to have a list of legally qualified interpreters and CART providers, please contact Cheri Davis, Commission Legal Auxiliary Services Referral Specialist, at 303-866-4734 (TTY), 303-866-4824 (voice) or cheri.davis@state.co.us.

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program

This is slightly revised from the October 2007 Monthly Bulletin. Please take the time to read and don't hesitate to request a copy of the revised rules if you desire.

The Commission through the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) Committee has revised and submitted the rules to the CDHS State Board. TEDP was originally designed to make telecommunications equipment (TTY, amplified phones, speaker phones, ring signaling devices and specialized telephone equipment for deaf-blind citizens) available to citizens of Colorado who are deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, or deaf-blind and who meet the financial eligibility guidelines, currently set at 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. Upon approval of the pending rule changes, the poverty level requirement is no longer required by the state and additional telecommunications equipment such as videophone, pager and other will become available. Median household and family income guidelines will be utilized. Revisions will be effective April 2008 if all goes well. The DHS State Board will hold two readings before the new rule changes are approved.

If you would like to have additional information or need a copy of the proposed rules, please contact Cliff Moers, Commission Director, at 303-866-4734 (TTY), 303-866-4824 (voice) or cliff.moers@state.co.us.

Commission Meeting Update

The next scheduled meeting for the Commission is at 3 p.m. on Thursday, January 10, 2008, at the Colorado Department of Human Services building. The address is 1575 Sherman St., Room #4A/B, Denver, Colorado 80203. There will be a public comment period available to the public during the meeting. This is an opportunity for our citizens to address the Commission. If there are documents that you would like to share, please contact the Commission Director, Cliff Moers, at 303-866-4734 (TTY), 303-866-4824 (voice) or cliff.moers@state.co.us in advance so that your information may be included in the Commissioners' package of materials.

The scheduled regular Commission meetings for the year of 2008 are as follows:

March 6, 2008
Location to be announced

June 5, 2008
Location to be announced

September 4, 2008
Location to be announced

December 4, 2008
Location to be announced

Every meeting is held between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Attached is the approved June 7, 2007, meeting minutes. Enjoy!

Legislative News

Hearing Aid Legislation: In 2003, the House and Senate passed legislation requiring insurance companies to pay for hearing aids for children. Governor Owens vetoed the bill. The group, who proposed the legislation, has reconvened as the Hearing Aid Coalition and is headed by family support organizations such as Colorado Families for Hands & Voices, Alexander Graham Bell, and professional organizations such as the Colorado Academy of Audiology. The Coalition is looking for support from agencies to endorse the bill. The current bill is in the same format as the original bill. It would require private insurance companies to cover hearing aids every 5 years for children birth through age 18. For more information, contact Janet DesGeorges, Coalition Co-Chair, at 303-492-6283, janet@handsvoices.org or P.O. Box 3093, Boulder, CO 80307.

Interesting piece of legislative information: In the 2007 state legislative session alone, there were 1,691 legislative proposals. All, but 50 were bills. 50 were resolutions. The Department of Human Services where the Commission is housed, kept track of them all, including resolutions. Sometimes the resolutions are related to ballot issues and interim committees that could affect the Department.

Noteworthy Community News

The Hearing Loss Association of Boulder (HLAB) recently received funding to conduct a one-year project to improve awareness of hearing loss among older adults in Boulder County. The "Hearing Loss Awareness Project" is funded by the Boulder County Aging Services Department (BCASD) "Create Our Futures Technical Assistance Funds" program. HLAB was the only community-based non-profit organization funded this year, with \$5000 in county funds and \$5280 in matching funds from community partners. BCASD is committed to "Creating vibrant communities in which we all age well" and the theme of this project is "Living Well with Hearing Loss." The Project Director is Rebecca Herr, HLAB President and member of the Boulder County Aging Advisory Council. HLAB is one of 4 Colorado chapters of the Hearing Loss Association of America (formerly SHHH, or Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People).

The Hearing Loss Awareness Project focuses on two groups: older adults with hearing loss, and the people who interact with them, such as family, friends, caregivers, Senior Center and Aging Services staff, medical personnel, and others. HLAB members will present workshops about hearing loss at Boulder County Senior Centers and to senior advisory councils in Boulder, Longmont, Louisville, Lafayette, Nederland, Lyons, Allenspark, Erie, and Niwot. HLAB members will also serve as "Communication Coaches" to individual seniors, to transfer knowledge of adaptations to hearing loss based on their personal experiences. The project has 3 main themes: Attitudes and Awareness, Adaptive Techniques, and Communication Technology. Project goals are to increase personal and public knowledge about hearing loss, to encourage peer-to-peer connections for sharing information and ideas, and to improve awareness about hearing loss in specific community groups working with older adults. The funds will cover creation of printed materials, event advertising, resource development, honoraria, and workshop costs. Project materials and resources will be shared with other HLAA Colorado chapters as well as other Aging Services agencies in Colorado.

It is the hope of HLAB members that this pilot project will encourage other advocacy groups to seek similar public funding opportunities in their own communities to increase awareness about hearing loss issues. For more information on this project, contact Project Director Rebecca Herr at hlaboulder@gmail.com or 1750 30th Street #222, Boulder, CO 80301.

Presentation or Communication Access Session Available

A presentation about the Commission and its functions or a session on information and technical assistance for communication access in any setting is available. Please contact the office to schedule a presentation or communication access session.

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